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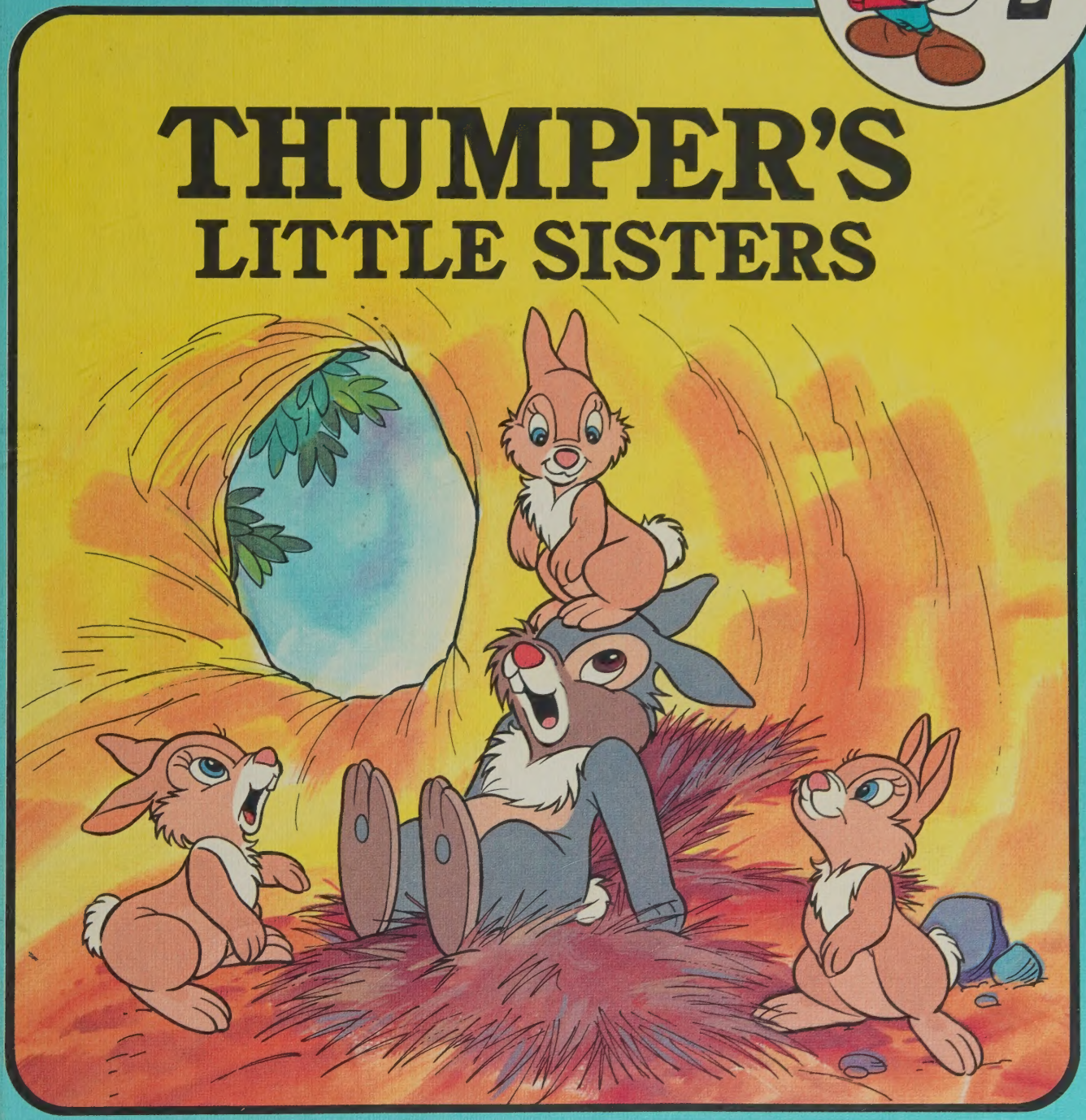
VOLUME 2

THUMPER'S LITTLE SISTERS



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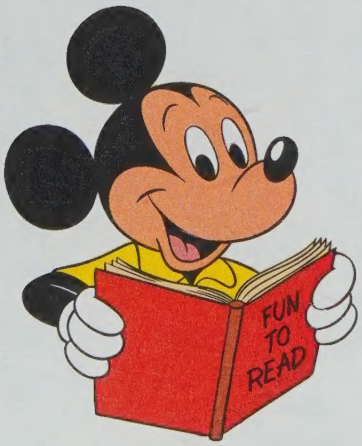

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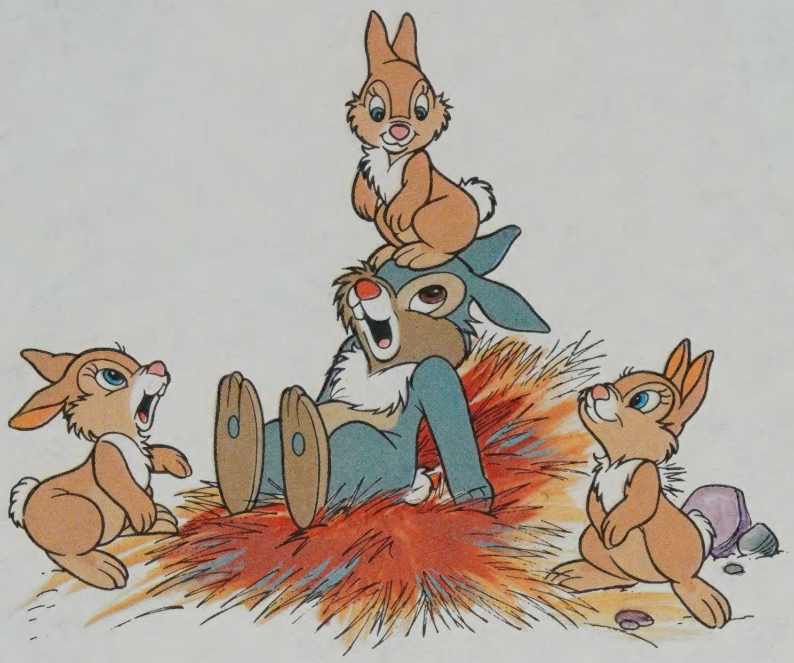

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One morning Thumper the rabbit felt sad. He sat under a big oak tree. But he did not thump his foot. He did not nibble the fresh green grass. He just sat and looked sad.

"What's wrong, Thumper?" asked Bambi.

"My mother and father do not love me anymore," said Thumper. "They hug my baby sisters, but they never hug me. They never talk to me. They have forgotten me!"

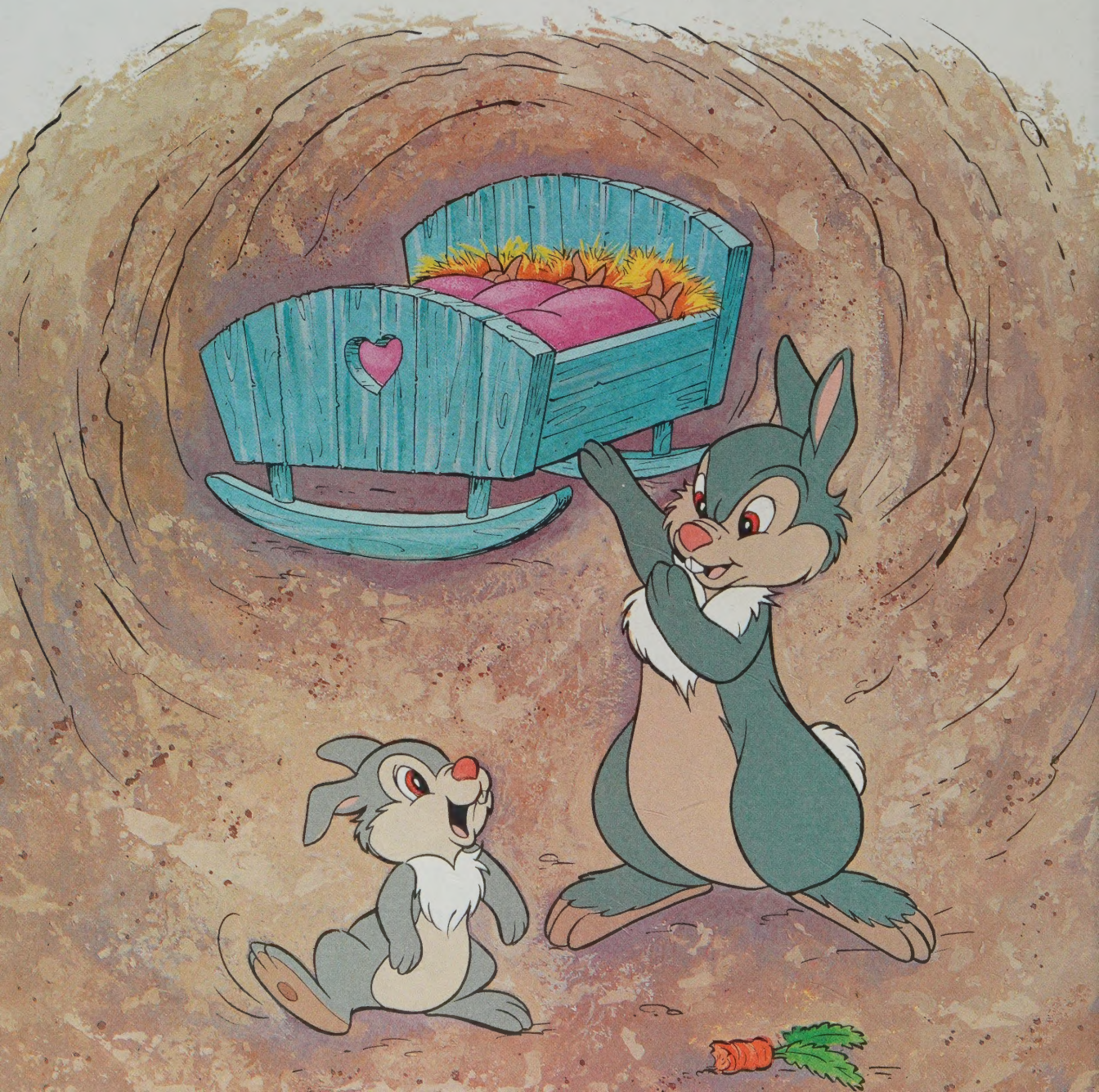
"Mothers and fathers never stop loving their children," said Bambi. "When your sisters are older, your mother and father will have more time for you. And your sisters will be more fun!"

Thumper felt happier when he heard this.
He went home right away.

But things did not get better. Things got worse.

When Thumper tried to thump in the house, his father stopped him.

"Quiet, Thumper! Your sisters are asleep!"



When Thumper tried to nibble some dry grass, his mother stopped him.

"Don't eat everything in the burrow," she said. "Save some for your little sisters."

As the days went by, the babies did get older. They followed Thumper everywhere. And they never stopped asking him things.

"Why are you doing that, Thumper?" they asked. "Can we do it too?"

They sat on Thumper when he took his nap. One sister poked him in the eye.

"Are you in there, Thumper?" she cried.

At last the sisters were old enough to play outside all day. And who did they want to play with? Thumper, of course!

"Watch out for them, Thumper," said his mother. "Don't let them get hurt."

Thumper did not want to watch out for his sisters. He wanted to play by himself. He turned his back and climbed a fence. His sisters ran across the field.

All of a sudden Thumper heard a squeal.
"Thumper, help!" cried one of the sisters.
"Save us!" cried another.
A dog had come sniffing through the grass.
It was a big, hungry-looking dog.

"Oh, no!" cried Thumper.

He jumped down from the fence, and he ran right in front of the dog.

The dog forgot about the baby rabbits. He ran after Thumper.

Thumper ran across the field. The dog ran after him. Thumper ran faster and faster, but still the dog ran after him.

"I must run home!" Thumper said to himself. "If I don't, the dog will get me."

With that, Thumper ran as fast as he could. He ran straight into the rabbit hole. The dog barked and howled outside.

"Oh my goodness! Now the dog knows where we live," cried Thumper's mother. She hugged the baby sisters.

Soon a man came from the farm and took the dog away.

"He's gone! We are safe!" said Thumper.

"Not for long," said Thumper's father. "That dog will come back. What have I always told you about dogs?"

"Don't lead a dog to your burrow," said Thumper in a low voice.

"Papa, Thumper had to do it," said one of the sisters.

"He did it for us," said another.

But Thumper's mother and father were not listening. "We have to go and look for a new burrow," said Thumper's father.

"You children stay here," said Thumper's mother. "We will come back for you."

So Thumper's mother and father set out to find a new burrow.

Thumper watched them go. He felt sad and hurt and angry, all at the same time.

"All right for them!" he said. "They don't care about me. I don't belong here anymore. I'll go and find a burrow of my own. Then they will be sorry!" He started off.

The sisters ran after him.
"Stop!" cried one.
"We love you!" said another.
"We don't want you to go!" said the third.

Thumper did not look back. He made believe he did not hear his sisters.

They stayed close behind Thumper. He went deep into the woods.

The sisters were there when Thumper saw a hole. It looked as if it might make a good home for one small rabbit.

Thumper sniffed at the hole. He wanted to see if any other animal lived there. Then he moved a little closer to the hole.

SNAP!

Thumper felt his feet go out from under him. He felt himself bounce high in the air.

He was caught in a snare! He hung from a high branch. And no matter how he tried, he could not free himself!

Thumper's sisters tried to help him. One little sister stood on the other little sisters. But the branch was too high. They could not reach Thumper.

"Don't be afraid, Thumper," said one sister.

"We'll get help," said the second.

The third sister stayed with Thumper. "I will sing to you so that you won't be lonely," she said.

The first two sisters ran to get help.
The third sister sang a gentle little song.
She stayed close to Thumper.

Soon the two sisters came back. Bambi was with them. So was Flower the skunk.

Bambi tried to bend the tree so that it touched the ground. Then Thumper could wriggle free. Flower helped.

But before Thumper was free, his mother and father came down the path.

"Oh, Thumper!" cried his mother. She was very frightened.

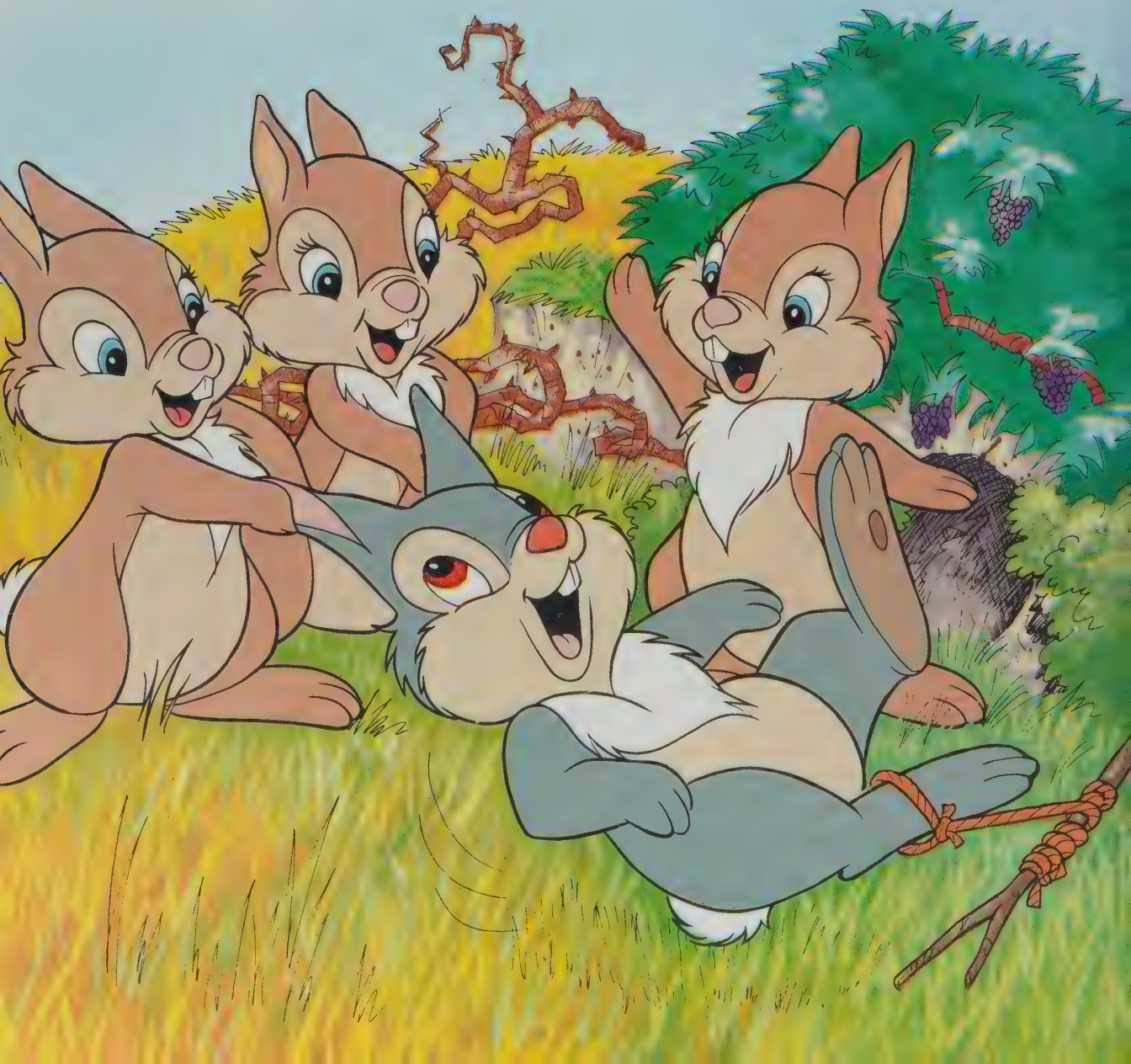
"Be brave, Thumper!" said his father. "We will save you!"

Bambi gave the tree branch a great tug.

Flower bounced on the branch as hard as he could.

Thumper's sisters pulled and tugged at Thumper's ears.

At last Thumper's foot came out of the snare!



"Thumper dear!" said his mother. She hugged him until she took his breath away.

"We saved Thumper, Mama," said one of the sisters.

"And he saved us!" said another.

Then the sisters told the whole story of how Thumper had run in front of the dog.

"That big old dog wanted to eat us up," they said. "But Thumper did not let him."

Thumper's father was so proud that he hardly knew what to do. "That's my boy!" he said. Then his father thumped Thumper on the back to show how proud he was.

Thumper was happy.

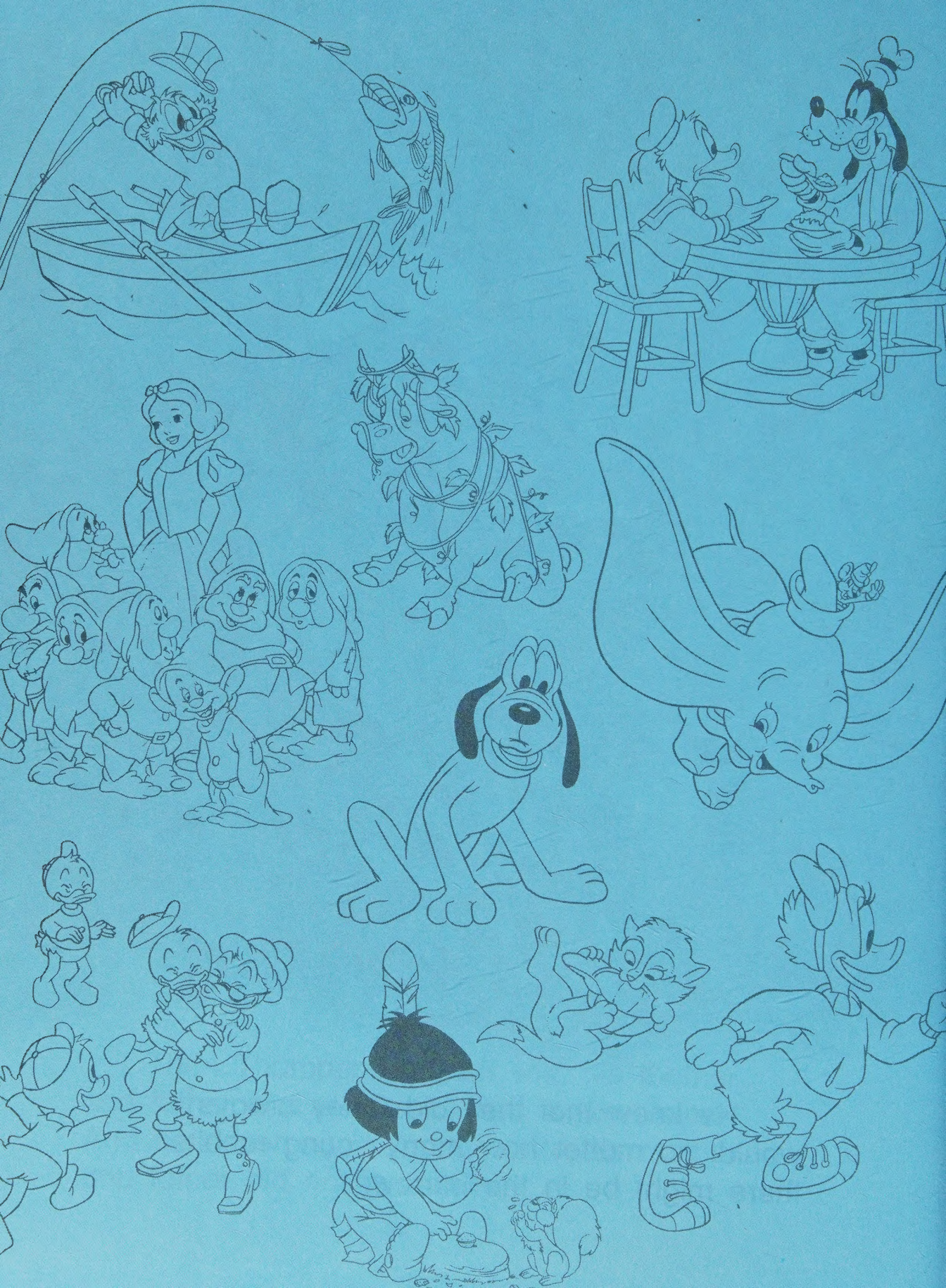
"My mother and father do love me," he said. "They were just too busy to tell me."

"I guess mothers and fathers are like that," said Bambi.

"My little sisters love me too," said Thumper. "I'm glad I have little sisters. They are not so bad after all!"

Then Thumper went off with his mother and father and sisters, to find a new home. And he never again thought that his mother and father did not love him.

He knew that they did. They always would, no matter how many young rabbits there might be in the burrow.



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